Increase in circulation of Currency Notes

*110. SHRI J. P. JAVALI Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that in the last ten years circulation of currency notes has increased considerably,

(b) if so, what is the percentage increase from 1980 to 1990, and

(c) whether such high increase in circulation of notes has created problems of storage in banks?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The volume of currency notes in circulation has increased considerably during the 10 years period 1980—1990. The total volume of notes has increased from 7980 million pieces in 1980 (March end) to about 20656 million pieces in 1990 (March end), representing a percentage increase in the volume of currency notes during the last 10 years of about 159 per cent.

(c) Because of accumulation of lower denomination notes, some currency chests maintaining branches of Public Sector Banks are experiencing storage problems.

Closure of High Courts due to strike by lawyers

*111 SHRI V. GOPALSAMY·
SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATARAMAN:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that various High Courts remain closed frequently due to strikes by lawyers,

(b) if so, the number of strikes resorted to by lawyers during the last three years; yearwise and High Courtwise,

(c) whether there is any norms regarding the minimum number of days a High Court is expected to function in a year;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) how many High Courts worked more than 200 days in a year during the last three years, yearwise and High Courtwise, and

(f) what steps are being taken to ensure that High Courts work for maximum number of days in a year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY). (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c), (d) and (f) All the High Courts have been advised to regulate their vacations in such a way that the number of working days does not fall below 210 days in a year and the High Courts generally follow the said norm

(e) All the High Courts have worked more than 200 days in a year during the last three years.

Suggestions received from the public for saving foreign exchange and reducing public expenditure

*112. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether the country is now in a debt-trap,

(b) whether Government are aware that in 1986 the then Finance Minister had invited suggestions from the public for saving foreign exchange and reducing public expenditure in response to which many valuable suggestions were received but were never acted upon seriously by Government, and

(c) whether Government propose to re-examine and review these suggestions especially those relating to savings on imported fuels?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) (a) No, Sir

(b) and (c) Suggestions were invited from the public in connection with the Budget for 1986-87 The suggestions received related mainly to tax concessions, incentives and fixing the size of the Annual Plan 1986-87 Such suggestions are received before the formulation of the Budget every year and are taken note of to the extent feasible while formulating the Budget of that year.

Evasion of Customs duty by a Bombay based company

*113. SHRI VIREN J SHAH.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state·

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item which appeared in the Indian Express published from Bombay dated December 5, 1990 to the effect that officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence have unearthed an alleged fraud by a Bombay based company importing scamless pipes and tubes and stainless steel covers for supply to the ONGC without paying any customs duty;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these items were not used for the purpose for which these were imported and whether the customs duty evaded amounted to Rs. 7 crores, and

(c) if so, what action is being taken against the company?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA)· (a) Yes, Sir. .

(b) and (c) Acting on intelligence reports, the Officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence searched the office and factory premises of the firm M/s. P. J. Pipes and Vessels (P) Ltd. on 3rd November, 1990 The firm had reportedly imported 548 M T of stainless steel plates without payment of duty during the period from October, 1989 to March, 1990, under Special Imprest Licences read with Customs Exemption Notifications, with the condition that the stainless steel plates will be used in the manufacture of casing pipe connectors and thread protectors for being supplied to M/s ONGC. The firm had reportedly not manufactured the end product using stainless steel and had sold about 277 M T of the imported stainless steel plates in the local market The balance quantity of about 271 M T have been seized Further investigations into the case are still in progress.

Assistance to small scale industries by SIDBI

*113-A. DR JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN·

SHRI BAL RAM SINGH YADAVA·

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the Small Industries Development Bank of India has recently introduced a scheme for assistance to the small scale industries;

(b) if so, the industries proposed to be given assistance under this scheme, and

(c) whether assistance to various States is being given under the scheme, and if so, the names of such States where industries have benefited and the amount of assistance given?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA). (a) and (b) Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has introduced 5 new schemes for the benefit of units in the small scale sector since July, 1990 Of these, the latest scheme is for direct assistance for development of industrial areas. Under this scheme,